

there's something rather nice that they're going to school, coming home, going to sleep at night, and not worrying about a nuclear conflict erupting and engulfing the whole world.

We've got a lot to be grateful for in this country. We've got a lot of problems, but we're the leader of the world, and I intend to keep it just exactly that way. We're going to whip this economic problem we're facing. We are going to continue to lead the world. We are going to stay involved at home and certainly abroad, now and well into the next century.

So, don't let the continuous pounding of

what's wrong with this country obscure your fundamental confidence, your fundamental conviction, which is mine, that we are the greatest, freest country on the face of the Earth, and we're going to prevail.

Thank you all very, very much.

*Note: The President spoke at 9:20 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to the following association officers: Dirk VanDongen, president; Jay Church, chairman of the board; Jimmy Taylor, chairman-elect; and Alan Kranowitz, vice president for government relations.*

## Remarks on the Presentation of the Senior Executive Service Awards

*January 23, 1992*

Connie, thank you. And at the outset of these remarks, let me just pay my respects to Connie Newman and say what a first-class job I know she's doing at OPM. And I know that you take a lot of pride in this event, since you rose through the ranks yourself, starting, as I understand it, if my history is correct, 30 years ago as a GS-3—[laughter]—I've still got you beat on the age now—[laughter]—GS-3 clerk-typist at Interior. And look at you now. And we are very, very proud of you.

I also want to welcome Ed Derwinski, Secretary Derwinski; Acting Secretary Busey; Secretary Stone; Pat Saiki, the Administrator at SBA; Director Sessions; and so many other distinguished guests. I think I see Admiral Truly out there.

I hear that when one of the recipients was told that the speaker today would be the most important man in Washington, he said, "I thought Joe Gibbs had already left for Minneapolis." [Laughter] We are caught up in a frenzy here, but that should not detract from the importance of this event.

And it is a privilege for me to be over here today to congratulate some extraordinary people, you might say unsung heroes. You don't always get at the head table, don't always have your name flashing out there

in lights. You may be lucky on that one. [Laughter] But really extraordinary people.

Vince Lombardi, you remember, he gave some pretty good advice off the field as well as on. He put it this way; he said, "The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence."

Well, today what we're doing is honoring the lives of great quality. I am told that only one percent of our SES can receive the Distinguished Executive Award. And that means that out of more than 3 million public servants, you few here today embody the very finest qualities of leadership, dedication, personal integrity, and public service.

I reminisce that when I was growing up, my parents, particularly my dad, instilled in me a tremendous respect for the duty and obligation of public service. And I know that you share my belief that Government service is a public trust, that the highest honor we can have is to serve our country and in so doing serve our countrymen.

Good government cannot work without you, committed men and women who devote yourselves to making certain that our Government truly serves the people. Look at the contributions that you've made

in this past year alone. Some of you were instrumental in one way or another in Operation Desert Storm. You share in the triumph we won for freedom abroad and, of some noted significance, of unity at home.

Some devoted your efforts to stirring economic growth here at home, creating opportunity for businesses and farmers and workers. Others dedicated your career to establishing ties abroad, bringing security and jobs to the people of this country in the process. You worked on child nutrition programs, directed the census, planned water resource projects, managed scientific research, oversaw economic analysis, helped reform the Federal pay system, managed aeronautical research, formulated human rights programs, managed veterans care, led drug investigations. The list goes on and on. In other words, through putting into practice administration programs, you touched the daily lives and shaped the future of all Americans.

And so, I am proud to participate in this program. I wanted to extend my congratula-

tions to all for living by the words of Abraham Lincoln, who said, "I do the very best I know how, the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing so until the end." Your country is grateful. And we thank you for your service.

And now, Connie, let's get on with the main business at hand. Thank you, and congratulations to each and every one of you.

[At this point, the awards were presented.]

Thank you all very much, and to all of you, congratulations. This is special, and it sends a wonderful message about the quality of our public service across the whole country. So keep it up.

*Note: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to James B. Busey IV, Acting Secretary of Transportation; William S. Sessions, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Richard B. Truly, Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.*

## Remarks on Environmental Policy January 23, 1992

*The President.* Let me just say that I've had an upbeat and very impressive briefing from Administrator Bill Reilly, from Secretary Watkins, and from Chairman Mike Deland on some of our ongoing efforts to protect America's precious environment. The budget that I will release next week I think demonstrates our continuing commitment to the environment in a way that is consistent with efforts to create economic growth and to preserve and create jobs.

In EPA's budget we're providing significant increases for Superfund; implementing the Clean Air Act; for enforcing our environmental laws, and that's critical; and protecting important resources like the Great Lakes, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Chesapeake Bay: a strong program. Our budget includes specific grants to help clean up the water in some of our major coastal cities: Boston and New York on the east coast;

Los Angeles, San Diego, Seattle on the west coast; and then back to Baltimore on the east coast.

This budget is going to include \$200 million, double the amount enacted last year, for pollution control in the border area—Bill's just back from there, I understand—along from California across to Texas.

Secretary Jim Watkins and I have tried hard making a major effort to clean up the Federal facilities at which his Department, the Department of Energy, has manufactured nuclear weapons materials. That's been going on now for 3 years. And next week's budget will reflect a major step forward in that commitment, a \$1.1 billion increase, 25 percent above last year's level. The 5.5 billion that I'll put in my budget for cleaning up Federal facilities is more than triple the amount included in the '89